

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

What Did She Just Say?

- Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
IX. Global Connections
X. Civic Ideals and Practices
- Grade Level: 9–12 (homework research and carousel group work)
- Objectives: The student will:
- Delineate Kirkpatrick's arguments against Carter's foreign policy
 - Determine what she believes about the differences between traditional autocracies and communist regimes
 - Work with others using a carousel to break down complex arguments
 - Write a short rebuttal in defense of Carter's approach
- Time: 1 class period plus homework time
- Materials: Documents: 1979 *Dictators and Double Standards*
- Exercises: *Double Think*
Readings from Dictators and Double Standards
- Materials: 10 flip chart pages posted around the classroom
12 different colored markers
- Procedures:

Setting the Stage

Since the 1970s, liberals and conservatives have had two very different approaches to U.S. foreign policy. The modern conservative position, as presented in this 1979 magazine article, was written by Jeanne Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick was as influential in the Reagan era as George Kennan was in an earlier generation. She became a trusted advisor to President Ronald Reagan and was named as the first American woman to serve as Ambassador to the United Nations.

In this lesson, students will read a strong criticism of Jimmy Carter's foreign policy and will also understand the basis of Ronald Reagan's Latin American policies. Kirkpatrick argues that the Carter administration undermined its own allies by forcing traditionally autocratic governments (like that of the Shah of Iran) to liberalize, leading to their overthrow. In her analysis, the successor states were worse—even more repressive than the governments they overthrew. But in her most cutting critique, she accused Carter of a Double Standard—overlooking the oppression of the communist system and failing to urge communist states to liberalize as well.

This is a dense and sophisticated argument, but one well worth mastering to understand the global dynamics of the 1980s and beyond. Students will tackle small sections of the document and add their understanding to that of their classmates to master the material.

Pre-Lesson

1. Before beginning the lesson, ask students to research the life of Jeanne Kirkpatrick for homework. As they do the reading, they should write down ideas as to why she changed political parties so many times and why she was so strongly opposed to communism.
2. The resource, *Readings from Dictators and Double Standards*, divides Kirkpatrick's article into 10 shorter readings. Make enough copies so that each team of 2-3 students can share one copy. Also print one copy of the exercise, *Doublethink*, for each team.
3. Before class begins, label one sheet of flip chart paper with each of these categories and then post the sheets around the classroom.:
 - Iran and Dictators
 - Nicaragua and Dictators
 - Cuba and Dictators
 - Southeast Asian Dictators
 - Soviet Union's Spreading Influence
 - Marxism/Marxist History
 - Historical Forces
 - Traditional Autocracies vs. Communist Regimes
 - The Carter Administration
 - Carter Foreign Policy
 - Unusual Statements that Surprised You

Day One

1. Ask students to share the information about the life of Jeanne Kirkpatrick and discuss and share what they have found.
2. Ask students to find a partner and have them come forward to receive one of the readings from the article and to choose one marker color. Each team needs a different color.
3. Show them the flip chart posters and tell them that they will be filling in the categories posted from their reading.
4. Give each team the *Doublethink* exercise for note taking during their reading.
5. As they read and interpret the article, go to each team and write down their reading number on a small chart and beside it mark the color of their chosen marker.

- 6.** As they finish their *Doublethink* notes, send them to one of the flip chart posters to fill in any information they have discovered, writing the number of their selected reading beside their entry. They can make more than one entry on each poster, but the teams should make each entry in the same color **AND** with the same reading selection number.
- 7.** Each team of two should visit every chart and fill in any information they might have about the topic.
- 8.** The teacher's job is to keep the "merry-go-round" moving as each team fills in the charts using their special colors.
- 9.** Once all the teams are done, the teacher will post each chart page in front of room so that all can see. What are Kirkpatrick's main arguments? Do they notice anything interesting in the information entered? Is her analysis correct? Is anything missing? Discussion will follow. Teams, identified by marker color, may be called upon to explain or expand upon their entries during the discussion.
- 10.** Follow this procedure with every poster page.
- 11.** When all groups are done, ask the students to write a rebuttal to her argument from the point of view of the Carter Administration. They may choose to attack Kirkpatrick's argument as a whole or focus on a more specific section.
- 12.** While collecting the papers, remind students that the positions they see on these posters become the basis of Republican foreign policy from the 1980s to the present day. ■